1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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what type of lease. However, many of the minor variations in land use which exist as between adjacent fields or parts of fields can be partially explained on the basis of their legal position. Thus the wasteland of il-Wiliga in the Wied tal-Pwales reflects both physical deterioration and a tenurial conflict. But, as may be observed throughout the regional and distributional studies in this volume, the patterns observable in Maltese farming are resultants of many forces and influences, in which the legal element plays a very minor part.

A third type of tenure, that of share-cropping, appears in some rather specialised forms in the Maltese Islands. Between land-owner and occupier, its main incidence seems to be as a working arrangement between aged parents and their children. Between coevals it appears as a temporary form of sub-letting known as *bin nofs*. Some of the factors influencing the first type have already been examined. In the second case, share-cropping arrangements are a consequence of the growing tendency of farmers to leave the land for short trial periods to seek other employment or to emigrate. As a form of insurance, leased or owned land is then often let temporarily to relatives or friends on the understanding that should the farmer return, his land reverts to him or in the case of the time-limit (usually five years) elapsing before his return, the share-cropper takes over full rights. Although this is of doubtful legality in the case of rented land, landlords do not seem to object. In the north and west of Malta, over 6 per cent. of the cultivated area is held in this way, and the proportion is over 3 per cent. in Gozo. In other areas, share-cropping would seem to be of negligible importance. Because this system appears to be based on expediency, the details of owner-cropper relationship are more variable than in areas where *metayage* is more fully developed as an institution. The provision of land, materials and labour and the division of product vary greatly. One case exists of a whole community working the land under a tenant-in-chief who provides land, seed, manure and some machinery and then claims one-fifth of the value of the crops which he buys back in bulk.

The share-cropping tenures terminate with the death of either party. In all other cases the death of a tenant results in the leasehold becoming part of his divisible estate and liable to fragmentation between the children, all of whom have equal rights of inheritance. The importance of this element in the process of *parcellement* has been regarded as very great, in Malta as elsewhere. Before considering an actual case-study of holding evolution, it is as well to note some of the general points.

First, the family group has strong powers to maintain its hold on land and to exclude others from it. In this they are supported by the action of landlords and by the legal codes as at present framed. On the other hand, little effort is made to prevent sub-division within the family group. Thus no analysis of the process of fragmentation can be made without a full understanding of the nature of the Maltese rural family.

In this chapter, the main elements in the physical and legal entity which constitutes the Maltese farm have been considered. As much as is feasible of the legal and customary background to the farm unit has been considered. In illustration of these points and in order to amplify them, a detailed analysis of the lands of one Maltese family follows. It is appropriate here to record the great kindness, forbearance and co-operation shown by the members of that family without whose considerable assistance such an examination could not have been made.

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2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

which divide the villages. I have therefore presented the current political and religious issues in Malta as concisely as possible, and have made no attempt to evaluate or to pass judgement on the policies of State, Church or political party. Consequently, any attempt to put the facts contained herein to polemical use is likely to distort them.

Though I lived in Malta during 1957 and 1958, this study is based on the research I carried out there from July 1960 to September 1961 under a grant from the Colonial Social Science Research Council, to whom I am most grateful. The terms of reference on which the research was based, and the form this final report has assumed, were dictated solely by my personal interests; my work was neither carried out on behalf of, nor a report to, a government.

My wife and daughters were with me during the entire period of fieldwork, and their encouragement and interest as well as the many friends they made were a great asset. We spent our first five months in Farrug and the last eight months in Kortin. These are not the real names of the villages, for the inhabitants of neither seek recognition. Indeed, throughout this study I have been at pains to avoid any indiscretion which would repay most shamefully our special debt of gratitude to friends and neighbours for their hospitality and good humour in the face of our ignorance of their customs. For the same reason, the names of many of the persons and saints who figure in this account have been altered.

I chose to work in Farrug because it is one of the villages divided by competing band clubs, and among other things I was particularly interested in the part this unusual rivalry plays in village politics. With a population of approximately 1,400, it is one of the smaller Maltese villages. We later moved to Kortin, a village of almost 5,000, since its size and the fact that it is not divided by band club rivalry provided an interesting contrast to Farrug. Available housing determined the choice of these particular two villages from among the many that would have met my requirements. Besides detailed research in these villages, I carried out comparative studies into the general organization, leadership and patterns of conflict of 12 other communities. In this work Mr. Edward Micallef was my very able research assistant for three months. I chose 11 of these villages by stratifying all villages in Malta and Gozo according to population and then drawing out a

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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house to house, transform the streets into gaily lighted tunnels. The piazza is usually draped in flags, and all the clubs are also dressed in their festal finery and their doors thrown open to the public. Many bands are hired and the mountains of fireworks are fused and made ready. All this is done before the visitors from outside arrive, and involves a great deal of organization, time and money.

The festa is thus an occasion on which communal values are reaffirmed and strengthened, as individuals and groups express their loyalty to their patron saint and unite to defend and enhance the reputation of their village. At the same time, the central position which the Church occupies in the social structure is strongly reinforced, for the parish church is the hub around which this festive occasion turns.

A festa is also an occasion on which the bonds of kinship are reinforced, for each family opens its doors to its relations, especially to those who live in other villages. Grown sons and daughters return to their parental home, forming, for a few hours, a grand family with a depth of three or four generations. Because of this influx of relatives, younger children learn to recognize more distant relatives whom they might not see at any other time of the year, and become aware of the network of kin relations that stretches out from their home. As parents become momentarily more indulgent during the festa and relax their watchfulness, it is also a favourite meeting time for courting couples and a traditional occasion on which marriageable boys and girls are introduced to one another.

The celebration of a village festa usually lasts three days. It consists of religious ceremonies, which take place principally within the church, and secular celebrations outside the church. The Maltese themselves make a distinction between these two elements in the festa: they call the former the 'internal feast' (*il-festa ta' ġewwa*) and the latter the 'external feast' (*il-festa ta' barra*). These often take place simultaneously. The mixture of sacred and profane which results was shown to me very vividly during one of the first festas I attended. I was in the church during a particularly solemn moment in the service of worship. Suddenly there was a nerve-shattering burst of fireworks from the roof of the church. Then, slowly, the sharp smell of burning gunpowder began to drift in through the open doors and mingle with the pungent odour of candles and incense. After that I ceased to be

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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aware of their separateness, and realized that both incense and gunpowder were ingredients basic to the celebration of a festa.

The actual celebration of the feast can be divided into three parts: the Triduum or Novena – the three to nine days of spiritual preparation which precede the feast day – the eve of the feast, and the day of the feast. As the feast is usually celebrated on a Sunday so that more people can come, the Triduum days are Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. High Mass is offered on these days, and in the evenings outside priests often come to preach sermons on religious topics related to the life of the patron saint. They are also days of preparation during which the elaborate street decorations are hoisted into place. Throughout the day the village is psychologically conditioned to the festa by salvoes of aerial bombs which are often timed to coincide with the ringing of the Paternoster and the Angelus. On the last day of the Triduum, after the final sermon, the village band marches through the main streets. Often the band is preceded by a mass of dancing and shouting enthusiasts of both sexes, who wave coloured scarves, silver loving cups and other symbols of their loyalty to their band and their saint. In villages where there are competing band clubs, this demonstration often provokes fights between rival supporters. These skirmishes are usually sparked off by the bands of girls who hoarsely shout themselves into a frenzy proclaiming the virtues of their saint and the shortcomings of their rivals. There are no visitors during this part of the feast.

On Saturday, the eve of the feast, there is a High Mass and Te Deum to mark the end of the Triduum. This is usually followed by a barrage of aerial fireworks. The local band then often marches through the village, stopping at all the clubs for drinks. This march is usually quite gay but in some villages it degenerates into a drunken spree. During the day, outside priests are brought in specially for the festa to hear confessions in the church. In the late afternoon, visitors begin to arrive to watch the Translation, a ceremony during which the celebrant, usually the Bishop, takes a relic of the saint on a short procession outside the church. After the Translation, the various guest bands march through the village and then settle down to play selections from operas and works composed by Maltese bandmasters. The many relatives and friends of the bandsmen join the gaily dressed crowds who have been streaming in by bus and car or on foot.

262 369 In respect of diet an important distinction between town and country emerges. In the towns the diet is essentially 'Italian' with the full complement of spaghetti and other pasta dishes while 'English' food is now also readily available; but in the country districts there is notably less pasta and its place is taken by potatoes and other vegetables. The townsman who has in any case to buy all his food has accepted Italian ideas on diet with certain local, Maltese modifications, but the countryman, still able to produce much of his own food, clings to vegetables for the bulk constituents of his diet. Bread is however a staple of both town and country (v. Section 2).

272 273 262 511 A range of soft drinks, commercial wines, spirits (whiskey is very popular throughout Maltese society) are now standard elements in the diet, while luxury foods such as chocolate, biscuits and the wide range of sweet cakes ('qaq') are further examples of items which have established themselves as needs and, consequently, as demands on the family purse.

178 291 Nowadays clothes (or at least the materials from which they are made) are bought by the housewife. This in itself has produced a minor revolution in rural economy. Traditionally the simple garments of cotton cloth were made at home or at least within the village and were worn by the field worker until they could be worn no more. Today a new range of clothing demands have appeared. The farmer now wants better clothes and footwear, but the greatest change is among the younger farming generation who want to dress like the youths of the towns. The retail sale of clothing in the rural districts has expanded rapidly, especially since the 1939-45 War years brought in the widespread use of military surplus material.

423 362 511 Housing is important in the present consideration because money is now being spent by the farmer both on buying his own house where he can but also on developing it and improving the furnishings.

[178] Having seen the comparatively well-appointed town dwellings he is not content with his poor country cottage.

178 511 There is also a wide range of incidental luxury or semi-luxury items which are being added to the list of 'needs'. Thus costs of travelling, entertainment and recreation all require money. Payments to the Church have now largely replaced the one-time gifts in kind, and taxes, paid by a few members of the farming community, can clearly only be met with cash.

451 511 [123] The first difficulty in investigating BUDGETS is the typical reticence to talk on matters financial. The second and more important draw-back is the aforementioned

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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CHAPTER I

Introductory

MY EIGHT CROWDED YEARS OF LIVING AND WORKING IN Malta—preceded by two brief halts as a temporary Naval Officer towards the end of the First World War—taught me a little about Maltese affairs and conditions, perhaps as much as a mere sojourner may expect to absorb in less than a decade. And the more I discovered about Malta and the Maltese, the better I grew to like both. What I then acquired, and retain, was an affection neither uncritical nor undiscriminating but based on the beginnings of understanding, I hope, of a small but complex community. I should be glad to think that something of what I have learned about and feel for those two remarkable little islands has found expression in the following pages.

This book is not a guide, it is not a handbook, it is not a history, it is not a collection of personal reminiscences, even if a personal note may be faintly audible here and there. It is above all not a commentary on Malta's politics, although I had my fill and more of these during my eight years. Twice during this period was Self-Government suspended and twice did I assume departmental charge under the Governor of the civil administration (having been concerned during Self-Government only with the Imperial side of the diarchy), a type of experience common enough among politicians returning from the wilderness to office but rare to the verge of uniqueness among Civil Servants. And there were other experiences scarcely less unusual.

Nor were Maltese politics of mere local, parish-pump range. Even in Homeric times Malta was looked upon as "the navel of the inland sea"; and the winds that blow upon it from every quarter, the cross-currents that buffet its rocky